PROCEEDINGS


Bureau of Police Research and Development organized a two-day long national conference at BPR&D office Delhi on September 12 and 13, 2019. The event inaugurated by G Krishna Reddy, Hon’ble Minister of State for Home Affairs, laid great emphasis on criminal activities and radicalization in jails and how this menace prevalent in Indian prisons can be curbed to make it a reformatory centre rather than a gaol. Many distinguished guests and eminent speakers both from Delhi and other states participated and delivered a talk on issues the jails in the country are faced with. Conference Secretary Tajender Singh Luthra IG BPR&D (Bureau of Police Research and Development) on inaugural ceremony warmly welcomed the Minister, the chief guest on the occasion. He, in his address, shed light on criminal activities and radicalization in jails and vulnerability among inmates. He talked about criminal activities in prisons, threat to the safety of vulnerable inmates and jail staff, radicalization in jails and security standard in jails, the four themes of the event. While addressing the participants he stressed the need for radicalization in jails, prison reforms and safety to the prison staff.

The speakers more categorically discussed inhumane conditions in prisons overloaded with prisoners across the country. The panelists lectured on numerous key issues the jails were wrestling with namely strife
within inmates, supremacy and bossism, treatment to new comers, under trials etc.

There were healthy rounds of questionnaire focusing on a good range of facets that talk about prisons realities: drivers for radicalization in jails that include hostile environments in prisons; isolation, cultural dissatisfaction, predisposition towards violent tendencies, susceptible to radicalization by extremists. Besides, vulnerability is the vital cause that includes physical and emotional trauma of prisoners and how they battle with acute and chronic stress factors due to sadness, anger, fear and physical problems. Radicalization preys upon the prisoners as they come from a poor, marginalized background with a low level of education, which exacerbates the situation.

Present on the occasion were prominent guests including Shri Ajay Kashyap, former DGP Tihar Prisons & DG Home Guards, Delhi, Shri Somesh Goel, DG, Prisons & CS, Himachal Pradesh, Shri Jaspal Singh IPS, UNB Rao IPS, Om Vir Singh Bishnoi IPS and many others.

"Prison reforms at this point in time are the need of the hour. It is a daunting task to reform the offenders; however, providing correctional treatment to them is most needed.

Overcrowding in jails is a serious issue to talk about; the central government has many plans in the pipeline to resolve this. I know the percentage of UTPs is too high to house the prisoners. Poor quality of prison structure particularly barracks and safety of women prisoners and their kids are the issues we need to place a high priority on. Shortage of funds is the main problem. However, the Centre has taken measures in this
regard. A budget of rupees 1800 crore has been earmarked for the modernization of prisons that will build 199 new jails and more than one thousand barracks. In the last 10 years, more FTCs (Fast Track Courts) have helped to clear the pending cases. In addition, Lok Adalat has speeded up the cases to reduce the litigation. We, of course, need to look into cases related to sanitation, food, health and environment, medical facilities and training to prison personnel. The education of women offenders is more important. I profusely thank BPR&D for this wide platform with a larger canvass where health discussions, valuable guidance and practical suggestions focusing on future action plans will be fruitful." G Krishan Reddy Minister for Home Affairs (State) expounded with great gusto.

Shri Neeraj Kumar, IPS, Former Police Commissioner, Delhi and Director General, Tihar Prisons.

I had to deal with cases like white-collar criminals and new comers bullied by the old birds into mopping the toilets inside the jails, which is a form of dominance. There were conflicts and violent incidents over coupons; the old timers and musclemen would snatch the coupons from the feeble lot and enjoy whatever they could. That system was replaced by smart cards; one could use them entering one's confidential password that helped in curbing the nuisance to a great extent. Now, biometric system has changed the dynamics altogether. During my stay/ tenure at Tihar, many incidents came to my notice that the jail staff was attacked, sometimes grievously too. Gangs of inmates would clash with each other with intent to establish supremacy over others that may further lead to extortion. Some gangsters run their crime syndicates and extortion rackets from behind the high walls. Besides, criminals lodged here carry mobile phone parts in cavities to make calls from inside the jail, as jammers at certain points do
not work. Sometimes, it has been seen that the criminals do attempt to escape from the prison; hardened criminals even escaped as the past witnessed. Our endeavor should be to resolve the issues within the premises, criminality should be curbed and above all it is time we needed to humanize the conditions in prisons in a constructive way. One thing I could see behind this colossal failure is a lack of education. Illiteracy is the root cause that breeds evils in society. IGNOU and Jamia Milia Islamia are providing education of a higher degree to inmates who can avail of an opportunity of campus placement too. The system needs funds for its continuation. The jail authorities allow the telephone facilities for inmates, everyday for 5 minutes which is payable. Tihar RJs are popular among the inmates. Music room talent is another aspect that grooms one's trait in music.

Dr K. P. Singh, IPS, Director General, Haryana.

Rioting inside a jail is a daily affair that goes on unbridled and at times, it becomes really difficult to handle. This is in view of throwing weight around to gain supremacy. Cases pertaining to NDPS (Narcotic Drugs Psychotropic Substances Act 1985) have been on the rise for quite some time.

Using mobile phones by criminals lodged in jails has become a regular feature, serious issue to talk about which may help a prisoner inside the jail with secret information, sometimes results in extortion from outside by posting a threat, ransom calls etc. Another problem most jails across the country have is a sex related offence which needs to be curbed. Vulnerability looming large cannot be put on the back burner. Crimes inside a jail are serious issues to talk about. I have, during my tenure,
experienced at close quarters the nexus that develops between senior officers and criminals, which triggers crimes and corruption in jails. Brief postings and frequent transfers within three years can stop the nexus from getting cemented. Two rival gangs clashing with each other is a common sight in jails. This aims at settling a score or seeking revenge. Over a period of few years, cases under NDPS Act have gone up exponentially. Prisoners doing drugs get their fix despite several locks. Drug addicts are more vulnerable. We must remedy this nuisance through zero tolerance and by bringing in more de-addiction centres. Gangster patronage is a syndrome that attracts budding offenders; this pushes the crime graph to move upward. Dreaded gangsters must be quarantined from the rest of the lot of criminals. Grouping of criminals in any format ought not to be encouraged.

Insecurity out of retaliation against jail staff has been a major issue; this needs to be looked into by promising security to them. I strongly believe that a prison must be more of a correctional institute than a jail. Any fault or failure on the part of the admin must be dealt with severely. NGOs and visitors must be scanned through before being sent in.

Mrs. Swati Sathe, DIG Prisons, Pune, Maharashtra.

Well, there are problems galore within prisons. Our jails have inadequate accommodation to house prisoners. Moving them in from other jails is an uphill task that overburdens the prisons already struggling with a space crunch. Arthur Jail, Maharashtra has had such a problem for long. Inadequate funding from the government has failed to shape the running of prisons. A 2000 capacity jail cannot accommodate 6000 prisoners; the situation got all the more chaotic post 9/11 segregation.
Some internal issues pertaining to jailors getting threatened are common: the criminals talk like which bus number you board and from where and at what time, where your son studies, and in which class I know all that. These are the threats a jail staffer usually gets from the criminals.

Court *peshi* (appearance) is yet another problem one has to be more vigilant during the course of time. As seen earlier, some criminals lodged in jails make weapons from PWD tools and wreak havoc using them. We had to make Abu Salem’s video of court hearing to avoid any ruckus. Ladli project at Kohalapur is doing quite well. Women prisoners have been doing satisfactory work under this project. Making LED bulbs with other jobs including technical work and agriculture has raised income.

**Mrs. Harshita Mishra, Jailor, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.**

Radicalization in prisons is an issue too vital that needs immediate heed. This has changed the whole scenario into criminalization; this I guess is a potential threat. Direct contact with inmates tends to spike the crime rate. Pre and post release, if taken seriously, can curb crime. Eradicating radicalization is the call calling attention.

Justice Mulla committee report on corruption, overcrowded jails, discrimination, inequality, sanitation, food, health and sexual violence must seriously be endorsed. The report submitted talks about reform and rehabilitation of the offenders behind bars. BPR&D too must take a note of it and allocate the budget.
Shri Rupinder Singh, IG Intelligence, Police Hqrs, Rajasthan

Jails are crowded with 53 percent Muslim offenders lodged. Young and first timers are more prone to gangs. A good number of insiders are innocent; rape is a weapon used to settle all kinds of disputes. Justice must prevail to get them off the hook. Jodhpur jail had a mega event when Salman Khan had court dates there. We had proceedings on video conferencing. Numerous other things I would like to highlight on this dais: mentally sick prisoners in jail and old age vulnerability. Tussles between jailors and inmates for supremacy are a grave issue needing to be redressed. Besides, polarization in jails for some time has been a problem for the prison staff.

Dr Meeran C. Borwankar, IPS (Rtd.) Ex Director General, BPR&D - Meticulously moderated the event and delivered a talk on amendments in laws that maintain the system. She emphasized varied aspects that could be helpful in curbing crimes within high walls.

There were many distinguished speakers on the occasion who addressed the august gathering of competent and trained professionals and responsible officers. At the event Shri Somesh Goyal DG Prisons who underscored many crucial aspects related to Islamic radicalization, Kashmir, Khalistan, militant groups, Muslim community, cyber attacks and issues like crypto currency. He elaborated on self-management, criminal behavior, and stressed the comprehending of the wider sense of career module, self-skills, thought module and above all spirituality. He further emphasized the need for personnel from Intelligence and Vigilance cells to handle the task.
Shri Ajay Kashyap, IPS, Director General, Home Guards - laid emphasis on certain issues comprising the resources to be used in the best manner.

Other prominent speakers were BD Sharma Advisor to Government of West Bengal.

Shri V. K. Singh, IPS - talked about basic necessities that include food and environment security to the prisoners. Providing basic dignity to prisoners can do wonders. He believes that splurging money on human resources and buying gadgets will be of no use.

Shri V.S.K. Kaumudi, IPS, Director General, BPR&D

It's my proud privilege to share my experiences with you distinguished guests. The annual conference coincided with Golden Jubilee Year of BPR&D which doubles the pride. BPR&D is firmly and strongly committed to improving the condition in prisons and initiating and enacting jail reforms. We have been doing this project with correctional administration department of states, various NGOs and other willing partners. BPR&D in the previous three years has organized training sessions imparting training to 1500 prison officers from across India. We have a full fledged correctional centre at Bhopal. We pursue a sincere endeavor to work for prisoners' rights and their safety. Incidents like assault on jail staff and clashes among inmates have been seen lately, this will be taken into consideration without delay. Besides, we do consider certain aspects like vulnerable sections of inmates on the basis of their socio-economic background, educational status and police record. Under the head of resolutions, we prioritize safety of the prisoners, lessening of overcrowded prisons, making more correctional homes, enhancing capacity
of housing inmates and changes in Prison Act. We need to engage psychologists and counsellors for those lodged in jails. Jailors should be well trained and technically equipped; robust implementation of E-Prison modules under ICJs must be taken in.

We need to maintain the norms related to policy of segregation and aggression stemming from radicalization in jails. Rioting in jails sometimes resulting in even killing and a threat to jail staff members from dreaded gangsters is a grave issue; human rights of delinquent and prison safety and reforms need to be addressed. I have noted some specific fears: detect and understand the activity of a criminal at an individual and gang level, different facets of radicalization in jails, security and protection measures for prison staff, prison reforms at various levels by experts and police personnel. We need to look into issues like substance abuse, health issues, self-harm incidents and sexual offences. Besides, serious and organized crime, gangs, extremism, corruption, radicalization need an immediate remedy on a day-to-day basis. I heartily thank the minister for his precious guidance and motivational force in the endeavour.

Shri V. H. Deshmukh, IPS, Addl. Director General, BPR&D presented the vote of thanks on the occasion of inaugural ceremony of this two-day long event. He addressed the celebrated gathering highlighting some key points relevant to the subject. He specially extended thanks to heads of prisons, delegates and other police officers for their valuable contribution to adding quality to the interaction pertaining to administrated related issues.
Shri Shashikant Upadhyay, DIG, BPR&D- compeered the event with great finesse. He immaculately described every single detail of the programme in a subtle manner.

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